

June 2000

# Library Profile-Millsaps-Wilson Library: On the Brink of Change

Barbara Dean

*Arlington County Public Library*

Jack W. Montgomery

*Western Kentucky University, jack.montgomery@wkyu.edu*

Allison Mays

*Millsaps College, maysap@millsaps.edu*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg>



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Dean, Barbara; Montgomery, Jack W.; and Mays, Allison (2000) "Library Profile-Millsaps-Wilson Library: On the Brink of Change," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 12: Iss. 3, Article 25.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.3380>

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact [epubs@purdue.edu](mailto:epubs@purdue.edu) for additional information.





# Library Profile — Millsaps-Wilson Library: On the Brink of Change

by Allison P. Mays (Collection Development Librarian) Millsaps-Wilson Library  
<maysap@millsaps.edu>

## The College

**Millsaps College** is a small, liberal arts college located on a beautiful 100-acre campus in the heart of Jackson, Mississippi. It was founded in 1890 by the Methodist Church with a grant of \$50,000 from **Major Reuben Webster Millsaps**—thus, the name “Majors” for the athletic teams. Current enrollment is about 1,400 students, (54% out of state), with a student-faculty ration of 13:1. Many older buildings have been renovated over the years, the most recent being the student and activities centers, which were just finished in January. The biggest change will be coming this summer: **Dr. George Harmon**, president for the past 22 years, will be retiring and **Dr. Frances Lucas-Tauchar** has been chosen as the 10th president—the first woman president in the college’s history.

**Millsaps College** has not only a strong tradition in liberal arts, but of being a leader in Mississippi. It was the first institution of higher education in Mississippi to voluntarily integrate, which it did in 1965, and it was also a strong defender of the teaching of evolution in this state. **Millsaps** is one of four private colleges in the U.S. to have a Phi Beta Kappa chapter, and last year was ranked by the *U.S. News & World Report* as the 3rd best liberal arts college in their list, “Great Schools at Great Prices.”

## The Library

The first library at **Millsaps College** was founded in 1892 in a room in Old Main Hall, which was heated by an open fireplace. The **Carnegie-Millsaps Library** was built in 1907, but in 1924 it was discovered that a “treacherous crawling marl” had caused foundation damage, and a second Carnegie-Millsaps Library was erected. In 1955, the current **Millsaps-Wilson Library** was built; the library space was doubled in 1971 with the completion of the Academic Complex adjacent to the library. In 1998, several renovations were made to the library, including a new computer lab. **Jim Parks**, the College Librarian for 30 years and the last librarian to receive tenure, retired from the library in December 1999; **Tom Henderson** is the current interim College Librarian.

The library has a collection of over 200,000 print titles, 650 print subscriptions, and access to over 1,700 electronic journals and the Internet. There is seating for over 350 in study carrels, study rooms and tables,

and over 50 computers. The Web version of the **DRA** catalog, **TAOS**, was brought up in the summer of 1999; other Web-based modules in acquisitions, circulation, and cataloging will be added later. There are five full-time professional librarians, and five full-time and two part-time staff. Special collections include the **Eudora Welty Collection**, the **Paul Ramsey Collection** in Applied Ethics, the **Kellogg Collection** of juvenile books and curriculum materials, and the **Lehman Engel Collection**. The library houses the **Mississippi Methodist Archives** and the **Millsaps College Archives**; there is also a separate rare book room. In 1997, the decision was made to withdraw from the U.S. government depository program because of concerns about shelf space and processing costs.

Two things plague the library: space and money. The money issue has been alleviated somewhat by a four-year insurgence of funds from an endowed account, to be used for books only. Everyone on the campus recognizes the need for a new library as the older section of the library is becoming so very dated, but other building projects on campus have taken precedence. Another part of the problem is that no one knows what libraries will be like in the next few years, especially with the rapid changes which are taking place, such as e-books and e-journals. Do we need a classic library building or a gigantic computer lab, or some combination of the two? We can look to other colleges as they build new libraries, such as **Rhodes College** in Memphis, to see what solutions they work out, and learn from their mistakes and successes.

## Acquisitions

As the **Collection Development Librarian**, I have an **Acquisitions Assistant** (part-time) and two student workers. Each department on campus gets an allocation of library funds, and each department has a library liaison, responsible for selecting titles. Liaisons are sent *Choice* cards, **Cambridge University Press** flyers, and other additional catalogs and book ads as needed or requested. This system not only utilizes the specialized knowledge of the liaisons, but helps build communication between the library and the various departments. I make decisions on purchases using the general funds, sometimes asking for input from other librarians or faculty if I want another opinion. I also deal directly with a few faculty members. Departments also have standing orders and we plan to review these in the next year, to see if any changes need to be made.

To prepare our book orders, the student workers search vendor databases to verify the information and to determine availability. I download bibliographic records from LCMARC and assign a database control number to each title. If a record is not available in LCMARC, a brief bib is created. I decide on a vendor, and get a batch together for my assistant, who creates the actual purchase order in **DRA**. The division of labor can change, but this is generally how it has evolved. Our book vendors are **Eastern Book Company**, **Emery-Pratt**, and **YBP**; for standing orders, we use **Book House** and **Ambassador**. All will accept email orders; currently we are not set up to send orders in BISAC text. Occasionally we order directly on the vendor’s Website, especially if we need to include notes or special instructions. Because we have a credit card, we are able to place orders with **Amazon.com** and **Barnes&Noble.com**, as well as some out-of-print vendors. We try to keep credit card use to a minimum, as the invoicing is a bit more labor-intensive.

We have established accounts with a few local bookstores. I am currently experimenting to see which method is best: online orders, or dealing with the local bookstores. Considerations are the level of service, and weighing the cost of shipping with driving to the bookstores. Shopping locally also has the added personal benefit of browsing; it’s also a good way to spend budgeted funds in a hurry at the end of the fiscal year.

## Serials

The Serials Assistant has two student workers, and she uses an in-house program to check-in and invoice serials. Because the **DRA** system did not have certain necessary features, a library staff member created an in-house program for serials, using **Professional File**. This program has been retained and used side-by-side with **DRA**, but it will eventually be abandoned as we migrate to the Web serials module of **DRA**. We do not have much of a problem with missing issues (mercifully, nothing is routed outside the library!), and we do not participate in any duplicate exchange programs. This department is also responsible for the binding, which is done by **National Library Bindery**; our serials vendor is **EBSCO**.

Since the serials budget has been frozen for some time, we are not doing much in the way of acquisitions in this area. The Serials Assistant maintains the databases, deals with title changes, billing and ship-

*continued on page 60*



## Library Profile from page 58

world of serials. Each academic department has its own serials (housed in the library, not in each department); like the standing orders, these should be reviewed in the next year.

## Nothing Stays the Same

I subtitled this article "On the Brink of Change" for several reasons. Not only will we have a new president who will bring her own style of management, but there will be a search for a new library director in another year. Will we be able to retain our current director, or will it be an "outsider," an unknown? This could drastically change things! We also hear rumors of a new library being built in a few years, which will be exciting, and, hopefully, rewarding. The college is currently undergoing the process of self-assessment in preparation

ping errors, and all of the other delightful idiosyncrasies that make up the



for the new president, and also for re-accreditation with the **Association of Colleges of the South**; changes may come as a result of this process. And last, but certainly not least, are the changes in technology—print versus electronic, easier access to e-journals, the proliferation of free databases—that will impact the library and our users. It will be very interesting to see where we are in a few years.

## A Personal Observation

I have the feeling that **Millsaps** is standing on her toes, ready to spring into the future. There is an enthusiasm here that is infectious, and it's exciting to be part of it. When I saw the announcement for this position, I remember thinking, "It's time to go home." And that's exactly how it feels.

And finally, my thanks to **Debra McIntosh**, College Archivist, for her assistance. 

## Profiles Encouraged

 **Allison P. Mays**  
Collection Development Librarian  
Millsaps-Wilson Library  
Millsaps College 

**Born:** St. Louis, MO in 1957. Effectively grew up in Memphis, TN

**Current residence:** Clinton, MS just west of Jackson

**Education:** BA in Music History from Rhodes College, 1980; Masters in Library Science from Indiana University, 1981

**Summary of job experiences:** I worked since the 4th grade in my school library doing processing, so I knew I could always get a job in libraries. Here is a run-down on my career: 1982-83: Reference Librarian at Memphis/Shelby County Public Library; 1983-89: Branch Librarian for U.S. Court of Appeals, Eighth Circuit, in Little Rock, AK 1989-96: Part-time librarian for Sutin, Thayer & Browne law firm, Albuquerque, NM; 1996-98: Temporary reference librarian at OSU College of Law Library; became the Acquisitions Librarian in 1997; 1999 to present: Collection Development Librarian at Millsaps College in Jackson, MS.


I jumped at the job listing at Millsaps, as I knew the college and was ready to return to the world of liberal arts and a small campus. I have always thought of myself as a "generalist" dabbling in various subject areas, and now I have the perfect job: ordering books for all departments.

**Family:** My husband, David, also a librarian, is currently working at home as an indexer. We have two girls: Laura, 12, and Helen, 8.

**Biggest recent surprise:** Professionally: that I get paid to look at book catalogs (For a librarian, it doesn't get any better than this.) Personally: finding out that I'm really a Southerner after all

**Last book read and literary tastes:** *The Accidental Tourist* by Anne Tyler. I read mostly mysteries, and am especially fond of Sue Grafton, John Grisham, and Tony Hillerman.

**What I do in my spare time:** Working on the house, cooking, gardening, reading

**What I'd like to be doing seven years from now:** Working in my new office in the new library at Millsaps College, managing a \$750,000 materials budget (it could happen!). 

## ADS WANTED!


SEND US YOUR JOB LISTINGS  
ITEMS FOR SALE • ITEMS WANTED

Contact: Edna Laughrey  
elaughrey@aol.com • ph: 734-429-1029

Or Visit our Website  
at [www.against-the-grain.com](http://www.against-the-grain.com)

## FOR ATG CLASSIFIEDS

### Memory Lane - ATG Millennium Issue

 We are planning a **Millennium Issue** of *ATG* with the Dec.2000/January 2001 issue (v.12#6). Have you read about or do you remember the days of manual or electric typewriters, electric erasers, or filing cards in the card catalog? How about carbon paper?

How about the days when librarians "shushed" everybody and we didn't even have Wilson indexes? Or when all we had were punch cards and no PCs.

Or maybe you remember what books were on the bestseller list when you went to library school?

Do you remember someone or something that you want to share with us? Make the **Millennium Issue** a real treat for all of us by writing down some of your memories or favorite moments! We would even love photographs.

Send memories to: **Katina Strauch**, MSC 98, The Citadel, 209 Richardson Dr., Charleston, SC 29409. <strauchk@earthlink.net> phone or fax: 843-723-3536 [www.against-the-grain.com](http://www.against-the-grain.com) 

We Need Submissions - Where's yours?